



October 23, 2017

To: Federal Communications Commission

In the matter of: Wireline Competition Bureau Seeking Comments on E-rate Category  
Two)WC Docket No. 13-184

***Despite the perceived ubiquity of internet access around the country, the public library is a still a digital lifeline for so many Americans today*** — especially the more than one-third of Americans who do not have broadband access at home. At Toledo Lucas County Public Library, we provided more than 1.5 million wireless internet sessions and provided nearly 1 million sessions on our public computers.

We are pleased to be able to provide input on the impact of having access to secure and sufficient funding for our library WiFi and internal connections. Before the E-rate Modernization in 2014, virtually no libraries received funds for then-Priority 2 services. Unless we were at a 90% discount rate, we could assume there would be no funding left after all requests for internet access were funded. USAC data shows that most libraries are eligible for a 70% discount or less, and according to the American Library Association, many libraries stopped bothering to apply for WiFi funding. Some states have reported that none of their libraries have received WiFi funds since the beginning of the E-rate program.

In communities across the country, people turn to the library to use our WiFi on their tablets, laptops, and other devices. Library users are downloading job applications, applying for financial aid, seeking health information, and communicating with family—all dependent on a strong WiFi signal. Increasingly, libraries also provide services that depend on WiFi, like coding clubs for K12 youth. Libraries everywhere know WiFi throughout the library is not a “nice to have” – it’s a core community service.

With the commitment of the FCC to ensure a library budget of \$2.30 (\$5.00 for a selected category of larger urban and suburban libraries) per square foot, libraries can finally upgrade outdated equipment or plan for new construction. They have confidence that desperately needed support will be there.

***Please maintain secure funding through the full five-year budget period, as adopted during the 2014 Modernization. Our communities depend on that funding.***